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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to develop an instrument designed to assess teacher job satisfaction in an educational setting and then to examine system level, personal, and demographic variables using a newly created measure of teacher job satisfaction. The sample population included elementary and secondary teachers from eight representative school districts in New York. The Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TJSQ) submitted to participants provided 620 usable returns. A description is given of the development of the TJSQ and how results were analyzed. The system level variables, personal and demographic variables, and the nine scales of the TJSQ provide the framework for the statistical analysis reported in this paper. Profiles of teachers from varied educational settings identify areas of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and practical implications for school administrators are discussed. (JD)

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Teacher Job Satisfaction:
Myth or Reality?

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Abstract

An instrument designed to measure teacher job satisfaction was developed and data were gathered from elementary, junior high school, and senior high school teachers in New York City, Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester Counties on system level, personal, and demographic variables. Factor analysis was undertaken as an exploratory technique to help discover underlying factors and as a psychometric procedure for the development and refinement of the instrument (TJSQ). A terminal nine-factor orthogonal varimax solution was accepted using the criterion of eigenvalues greater than or equal to unity. The internal consistency of the instrument was calculated (coefficient alpha) for each scale and for the total score (.93). The major analysis examined the similarities and differences among teachers on all nine factors.

Development of the TJSQ

The purpose of this study was to develop an instrument designed to assess teacher job satisfaction in an educational setting and then to examine system level and personal and demographic variables using the newly created measure of teacher job satisfaction, Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TJSQ). The second phase of the study utilized assumptions developed from previous research findings to determine to what extent these assumptions hold true in an educational setting.

In order to generate a taxonomy for the development of this instrument, the theories of Maslow and Herzberg were explored as sources of job satisfaction. These theories contain specific concepts that correspond to the factors logically found in the educational setting and which were identified in the development of the TJSQ. Consequently, their theories provide a system of classification that supports the conceptual foundation of this study.

The population from which the sample was drawn included teachers from New York City, Westchester, Nassau, and Suffolk Counties. Within each of these four geographic locations, a sample of two school districts was randomly selected by using a table of random numbers. Within each of the eight school districts thus identified, an elementary, junior high school, and a senior high school were randomly selected. Of the 1,600 instruments and personal data forms distributed to teachers in these schools, 631 returns were received from all eight districts, providing 620 usable returns.

Item analyses were conducted to improve the reliability of the newly created instrument. Since this instrument contained several scales (factors), each item was correlated with the appropriate scale total. Frequency distributions for items and for factor scores were obtained, and response patterns examined to assess the variability of ratings.

The internal consistency of the TJSQ was examined by obtaining coefficient alpha for each scale and for the total score (.93). The data were cross-validated using a split-sample technique.

Factor analysis was undertaken as an exploratory technique to help discover underlying factors and as a psychometric procedure for the development and refinement of the TJSQ. A terminal nine factor, orthogonal varimax solution was accepted using the criterion of eigenvalues greater than or equal to unity. The nine factors identified are: Supervision, Colleagues, Working Conditions, Pay, Responsibility, Work Itself, Advancement, Security, and Recognition.

The data were classified by sampling procedure into system level variables of location (urban/suburban), school district size (small/large), county, school level, and district. Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the similarities and differences of job satisfaction scores on the various scales (factors) in relation to the system level variables and the personal and demographic variables found in the personal data form (age, sex, marital status, total years of teaching experience, years in district, educational level, tenure, and union affiliation).

Similarities and differences among elementary, junior high schools, senior high schools, and the eight school districts on the nine factors

were studied by obtaining the scale means and standard deviations and by examining the distribution of scores. One-way analyses of variance, with significance at the .05 level, were performed among the system level variables to test statistically whether the means of the groups were significantly different from each other. At the county and school level, six factors were found to be significantly different, whereas at the school level within the district only two factors were significantly different, indicating more similarities than differences among groups.

Findings

The system level variables, personal and demographic variables, and the nine scales of the Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire provide the framework for the statistical analyses reported in this section. First, the demograpic analyses are reported with (a) a general description of the participating districts, and (b) cross tabulations of teacher characteristics (personal) and demographic variables analyzed by location (urban/suburban), by size of school district (small/large), by county in which each district is located, by school level, and by school district (system level variables).

Second, demographic data are presented from the National Education Association and the New York State BEDS Survey for purposes of comparison of characteristics of the target population with characteristics of the respondents to this study. These data are offered to support the generalizability of the findings of this study.

Finally, statistical analyses of the responses to the nine scales of the Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire are presented, analyzed

according to the same system level and personal and demographic variables as described above.

Demographic Analyses

The typical elementary school teacher in this study is a married female, approximately 43 years old, with 17 years of teaching experience, about 14 years of which are in her present school district. She has a master's degree or a master's degree plus 30 credits, has tenure, and is a union member.

Although the elementary school teacher is usually female, there are approximately equal numbers of men and women teaching at the junior high school level. The typical teacher at this level is married, approximately 40 years old, with 16 years of teaching experience, of which 12.5 years are in the present school district. The junior high school teacher has attained about the same academic level as the elementary school counterpart; that is, he/she has earned a master's degree or a master's degree plus 30 credits, is tenured, and is a union member.

At the high school level, there are approximately the same number of male and female teachers. The typical teacher is married, about 42 years old, with 16.5 years of teaching experience, of which 13 years are in the present school district. The educational level is somehwat higher than at the elementary and junior high school levels, since most high school teachers possess a master's degree plus 30 or 60 credits. The typical high school teacher is tenured and is a union member.

The typical suburban teacher is a married (72%) female (56%), approximately 42 years of age, with 16.5 years of teaching experience,

of which 14 years are in her present school district. Approximately 29% possess a master's degree. Eighty-nine percent are tenured, and 95% are union members.

The typical urban teacher is a married (74%) female (59%), approximately 41 years old, with 15 years teaching experience, of which 12 years are in her present district. Forty-four percent of the urban teachers possess a master's degree, 87% are tenured, and 99% are union members.

The typical teacher in a small school district is also a married (72%) female (54%) approximately 43 years of age. She has taught for 14 years in her present school district out of a total of 17 years of teaching experience. Master's degrees are reported by 27% of the respondents. Tenure is held by 89%, and 94% are union members.

The profile of a teacher from a large school district is that of a married (74%) female (59%) who is 41 years old and who has 15.5 years of teaching experience. She has been in the present school district for 13 years. A master's degree is held by 38% of the teachers; 88% are tenured; 98% are union members.

Comparison of Teacher Characteristics

with NEA and BEDS Data

A comparison of data from (a) the National Education Association (Status of the American Public School Teacher, 1980-1981), (b) the New York State BEDS Survey (1981-1982), and (c) pertinent data from this study are presented next. This comparison was undertaken in order to establish that the respondents are not systematically different from

the target population, and that the nonrespondents are not systematically different from the respondents.

The National Education Association depicts the typical teacher of 1981 as a married (73%) female (67%), approximately 39 years of age, with 13 years teaching experience, about 11 of which are in the present school district. A master's degree or sixth-year certificate is held by 49%.

The information provided by the New York State BEDS Survey depicts the typical New York teacher of 1981-1982 as a female (61%), age 33-40 (34%), with 11-15 years of teaching experience (28%), and with 11-15 years in the present school district (31%). Thirty-seven percent possess a master's degree; 87% have permanent status (certification).

In both the New York State BEDS Survey (1981-1982) and in this study, the typical school teacher, regardless of county, is described as a married female, between the ages of 33-40 years, with 11-15 years teaching experience, and 11-15 years in the present school district. However, one exception is the typical Westchester teacher in this study, with 16-20 years teaching experience.

In the New York State BEDS Survey, all counties except New York City report that between 42% and 45% of the teachers possess a master's degree; however, in this study between 25% and 32% possess a master's degree + 30. The BEDS Survey shows that 46% of New York City teachers possess a master's degree; this research found that 44% hold such qualifications. All counties except New York City, according to the BEDS Survey, report that between 91% and 93% of teachers are tenured; in

this study between 87% and 93% are tenured. Seventy-nine percent of New York City teachers have permanent status, whereas in this study 87% are tenured.

Statistical Analyses

One-way analyses of variance were performed with each of the system level variables and the nine factors of the TJSQ to identify differences among the various groups. Based upon location (urban or suburban), the five factors denoting pairs of groups significantly different at the .05 level were Supervision, Working Conditions, Pay, Work Itself, and Advancement. Suburban districts were more satisfied than were urban districts, except for the factor of Supervision.

Analysis by the variable of size (small or large district) showed that only the factor of Pay demonstrated significance between small and large districts with small districts being more satisfied than large districts. This finding is consistent with the findings of the National Education Association (1982) regarding the relationship between size of the school district and satisfaction. The National Education Association found that the larger the school system, the greater the dissatisfaction; that is, teachers in small districts are more satisfied than teachers in large districts.

When analyzed by county (New York City, Westchester, Nassau, and Suffolk), Working Conditions, Pay, and Work Itself demonstrated significant differences. New York City was the least satisfied area on all three factors, whereas each of the three other counties was the most satisfied on at least one factor.

Analysis by school level (elementary, junior high school, and senior high school) demonstrated significant differences between groups on the factors of Supervision, Colleagues, Working Conditions, Pay, Responsibility, and Work Itself. Elementary school teachers were more satisfied than senior high school teachers on all these factors, except Supervision. This finding is also consistent with the findings of the National Education Association (1982), which found that elementary school teachers are the most satisfied, and senior high school teachers are the most dissatisfied.

Finally, analyses by the variable of the eight school districts showed evidence of significance at the .05 level for differences between groups on the factors of Supervision, Working Conditions, Pay, and Work Itself. One school district in New York City was the least satisfied with all factors except Supervision. A highly motivated, upward-bound, upper middle-income community in Suffolk was the least satisfied with Supervision, whereas a status quo, lower middle-class community in Suffolk was the most satisfied, not only with Supervision, but with Work Itself. A conservative, working-class community in Nassau was the most satisfied with Working Conditions, and a rural, low-wealth community in Westchester was the most satisfied with Pay. The four most frequently cited factors providing information about differences among and between groups were Supervision, Working Conditions, Pay, and Work Itself. Colleagues, Responsibility, Advancement, and Recognition were cited at least once with no mention of Security.

Conclusions

One contribution of this study is that the TJSQ, which measures nine factors of teacher job satisfaction, has been developed. The factor analysis of this study reinforces the conclusion that the TJSQ offers other researchers and individuals in the field of educational administration a potential tool to assess how teachers feel about their jobs. This information about the nature of the work setting may assist in effective educational change and effective job redesign in order to maximize the achievement of organizational and individual goals.

Disregarding location, size, county, school level, district, and school level within the district, teachers generally are satisfied with colleagues, responsibility, and the work itself. Except for teachers in the elementary school in a highly motivated, upward-bound, upper middle-class community in Suffolk and in the junior high school in a residential, lower middle-class to middle-class community in Suffolk, teachers generally are satisfied with supervision. Teachers generally are also satisfied with security, except in the junior high schools in a conservative, working-class community in Nassau and a racially mixed, below average income community in Westchester, and in the senior high schools in a rural, low-wealth community in Westchester and a highly mobile, low income-high crime borough in New York City.

Disregarding location, size, county, school level, district, and school level within the district, teachers are dissatisfied with advancement. Only teachers in the elementary school in a racially mixed, below average income community in Westchester are satisfied with pay.

Regardless of location, size, county, school level, and district, teachers are generally dissatisfied with recognition, except elementary school teachers in a residential, lower middle-class to middle-class community in New York City, junior high school teachers in a status quo, lower middle-class community in Suffolk, and senior high school teachers in a conservative, working-class community in Westchester.

Therefore, the final conclusion to be drawn from this study is that previous assumptions regarding the disenfranchisement of teachers because of age, seniority, union affiliation, tenure, and other personal and demographic variables (as well as system level varibles) need to be examined in terms of these findings.

Practical Implications for School Administrators

The Status of the American Public School Teacher Survey that was conducted by the National Education Association (1980-1981) revealed that less than 22% of all teachers surveyed in 1981 were certain they would choose teaching again if they were just entering college, whereas only 25% felt that they probably would. Almost 18% felt the chances were even, and others stated that they "probably" (24%) or "certainly" (12%) would seek another career. In other words, less than 50% were certain that they would become teachers if they had to do it over again. The results are supported by a New York Times survey (1982) in which teachers in New York State indicated that they enjoyed their work, thought they were doing a good job, and were proud of their occupation. In spite of their positive attitudes toward their jobs, about half said they would choose another line of work if they had to start over.

These findings are echoed by the findings of the National Center for Educational Statistics, which indicate a decline in the number of college students planning to major in education. In contrast to the 1972 figures, in 1980 approximately half as many senior high school students planned to major in education.

The implication is that the decrease in the number of potential teachers, coupled with the low morale of practicing teachers, will lead to a teacher shortage in the near future. College graduates are not choosing the teaching profession because of low salaries, increased violence in the schools, poor working conditions, and the large amount of paperwork (clerical duties) involved. However, according to the present study, teachers are not (at the moment) as dissatisfied as expected. Teachers are dissatisfied with pay, advancement, and recognition, but satisfied with supervision, colleagues, responsibility, work itself, and security, except for a few elementary and junior high school teachers within specific districts. Working conditions is one area that shows dissatisfaction at the district level, as well as at the school level within specific districts. The fact that all but one of these results are within one standard deviation from the mean indicates that, regardless of location, size of district, county, school level, and district, teachers generally feel similarly about their jobs. Basically, those aspects of the job that are negatively perceived (pay, advancement, and recognition) are perceived as such by most teachers. However, their perception of those aspects of the job that are positive vary slightly.

School administrators can use this instrument to find out how their teachers feel about what they do. Administrators can gain valuable information about how their teachers evaluate their present teaching positions in order to determine teachers' expectations about the job and the work environment. Administration of the TJSQ to all teachers within a school district may promote the discovery of those aspects of the work setting that contribute to teacher job satisfaction. By careful examination of the results for each school within each level in a district, useful information may be obtained about the characteristics of the work situation and the characteristics of individuals. Such analysis may be utilized to redesign jobs to further strengthen the organizational fit between the job and the person. Educational policy decisions need to consider the importance of each aspect of the job to the individual rather than merely the level of overall job satisfaction. The results provided by the interaction between the nature of the work setting and individual teachers may facilitate effective job restructuring in order to maximize the achievement of organizational and individual goals and ultimately to improve teacher job satisfaction.

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